

## **LA GRANDE FOREST RESERVE.**

By A. Gaskill

Location: The area which it is proposed to withdraw from occupation under this name is in the northeast extension of the Blue Mountains – the detached mountain remnant in the extreme northeastern part of Oregon.

The reserve as outlined by the Land Office embraces something over 14 townships in Wallowa, Umatilla and Union Counties, Oregon, and three on the southeastern borders of Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield and Asotin Counties, Washington. Its long axis is northeast to southwest following the dividing ridge between the laterals of the Grande Ronde and those of the Umatilla and Walla Walla Rivers.

Topography: The land within the reserve is exceedingly broken and irregular. The crest of the divide is from 5,000 to 6,000 feet high and from it northwest and southeast, reach out a series of ridges between narrow, steep-sided canyons. On both sides the boundaries of the reserve are at about 3,000 feet altitude.

Water: In these hills innumerable streams gather, which in their downward flow contributes to the fertility of the foot-hill regions and pass on to the Snake River on the one side, and more directly to the Columbia on the other.

Soil: Within the reserve there is little soil, or at least few situations, suitable for agriculture. Beyond the borders the settlers have found such names as "Garden of Eden" and "Promised Land" appropriate.

(How about irrigation here? This paragraph is written from the notes about topography and silva).

Forests: A large part of the reserve area is incapable of bearing any growth whatever on account of the steepness of the slopes, but on much of it a more or less open forest is found. The most important tree, both in respect to quantity and practical value, is the Bull Pine, which on the lower levels frequently forms forests, estimated to contain as much as 12 M of merchantable timber to the acre. This average is said to be valid for whole sections, and is based upon the present loose logging practices.

Other trees which are found in greater or less quantity in accordance with soil, altitude, exposition, etc., are Western Larch, Red Fir, Engelmann Spruce, Lodgepole Pine, White Fir, Alpine Fir, Silver Pine, and in the bottoms willows, alders, aspen, etc.

Frequently the growth of these trees is stunted and poor, and their product fit only for fuel or fencing, yet commonly such material is worth as much as better in other localities, because it affords the only supply of the nearby population. (I do not enumerate the shrubs that J-- names).

Alternating with the forest areas, or scattered through them, are frequent grassy ridges, and occasionally meadows. These afford pasturage for bands of sheep. The northwestern edge of the reserve is now the favorite grazing ground.

Throughout the reserve marks of forest fires are abundant. It is more than probable that the scattered forest and many of the grassy openings are directly due to the repeated fires that have run over them.

Culture: Within the reserve are no settlements and no established industries. (This is true so far as can be learned from Johnson and the map). A few ranches are found on the better lands, and some timber and firewood is cut for Walla Walla and other nearby towns. These operations, with grazing, represent the only present use of the reserve, but its importance as a conservator of irrigation water and future sources of lumber and fuel to the increasing population of that region is manifest.

#### La Grande Reserve.

T. 1 S., R. 37 E.

"This township is a high mountain slope with grass spots and spots of Yellow Pine. I should judge about half timber and half grass. Spots about 40 to 100 acres each. About 10,000 M fairly good Yellow Pine, balance swan."

(The eastern half, less about 3 sections on south end, only is in reserve. A.G.)

T. 1.N., R. 37 E.,

"This township is partly burned in large spots with spots of small Lodgepole, White Fir, Spruce and Tamarack. High mountains and very deep canyons. Timber only good for fuel and R.R. ties."

T. 2 N., R. 37 E.

"The northwest part of township has a few bunches of Yellow Pine in spots. A lot of Lodgepole, White Fir, Red Fir and Spruce on the north slopes of some groves of Tamarack. About 5,000 M of saw timber, Yellow Pine and Tamarack. Balance only good for fuel."

T. 2 N., R. 38 E.

"Half of this township has good timber mostly Yellow Pine, some Tamarack, and Red Fir. Balance open, grassy slopes. Will cut 8 M per acre."

T. 3 N., R. 37 E.

"The north end of the township is high bald hills with a few Yellow Pine. The south part is all Lodgepole with White Fir of very little value."

(If north half of township is so poor why is it left outside reserve? A.G.).

T. 3 N., R. 38 E.

"This township was burnt 17 years ago. The west side has high mountains sloping to the Umatilla River. A lot of young Lodgepole has grown up since the fire and along the river bottoms are groves of White Fir, Spruce and a few Tamarack."

T. 3 N., R. 39 E.

"This township will cut 12 M per acre, of very fine Tamarack, etc. 50% Yellow Pine; 30% Tamarack; 20% Red Fir, some Spruce, Lodgepole and Vine Maple along streams."

(In T. 2 N., R. 39 E., is a sawmill cutting 700 M per year and a "steel mill." A.G.).

T. 3 N., R. 40 E.,

"This township has very fine timber; will cut 10 M per acre. 80% Yellow Pine; 10% Tamarack; 10% Red Fir. Some White Pine; plenty of small timber for R.R. ties."

(He marks Looking-Glass Bridge in Sec. 16 from which it appears that this is township 39 according to map. If 40, only a strip across north end is in reserve. If 39 about half is within. A.G.).

T. 4 N., R. 41 E.

"All timber in this township, except a strip 1 mile wide, along river. Slopes along river are very steep. Timber will cut 8 M per acre; 80% Yellow Pine."

(J-- makes river on east side of township, not west as on map. A.G.).

T. 4 N., R. 40 E.

"The north end of this township is very deep ravines, and high, rocky mountains; some small patches of Tamarack, Red Fir, Abies concolor, Yellow Pine, etc. (List of trees and shrubs). Township is burnt over: the trees left are of no value."

T. 4 N., R. 39 E.

"This township is nearly all burnt. On the south end is headwaters of Looking-Glass River. Some very fine bottom land, covered with tall Spruce, Abies lasiocarpa, Tamarack, Pinus monticola, Willow, Alder, etc. About 10,000 M in township."

(The three descriptions preceding indicate that J-- has numbered the whole tier one township east of the map. That is his T. 4 N., R. 39 E. is really 38 and is outside reserve. A.G.).

(Of township 4 N., R. 38 E. J-- says:-

"Township nearly all burned 17 years ago and several times since; a few patches of timber in north end: now in north part 35,000 sheep. Some cordwood cut for Walla Walla." A.G.).

T. 5 N., R. 39 E.

"This township is mostly burned a long time ago. This part of the country is a favorite sheep range: there are patches of small timber, mostly Lodgepole and White Fir, only good for fuel."

T. 5 N., R. 40 E.

"About 1/3 of this township is timbered in spots; balance grassy and open places and rocky bluffs. Standing timber 10,000 M."

T. 5 N., R. 41 E.

"About half this township is partly timbered. Along river and creeks are barren hills. Standing timber 10,000 M."

T. 5 N., R. 42 E.

"This township has fine timber; 90% Yellow Pine; 10% Red Fir; 10% Tamarack (sic). Will cut 10 M per acre."

T. 6 N., R. 42 E.

"Half of township is in Oregon and half in Washington. Fine timber; 80% Yellow Pine and 20% Tamarack. Will cut 10 M per acre."

(A.J.J. notes that outside reserve the country is very fine. T. 5 N., R. 43 E., is called "Garden of Eden" and T. 4 N., R. 42 E., "Promised Land." A.G.).

T. 6 N., R. 43 E.

"Half in Oregon and half in Washington. (Oregon part not in reserve A.J.J. reports only in Oregon he finds. A.G.).

"High bald bluff along river in southern part and good Yellow Pine, 5 M per acre, north of river."

(It may be assumed that this timber extends into reserve. A.G.).

(There is no record of the remaining townships in the reserve. A.G.).